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sonal anecdotes and reminiscences, which must otherwise have passed away without record. There is an ease amounting almost to carelessness in the diction of the book, and in the arrangement of the material; but it is the graceful ease of a man of taste and letters, and constitutes not a defect, but, in our esteem, a crowning merit. The author abandons himself, without reserve, to the current of his own thought and feeling, and in so doing has given us two biographies under the title of one. While we tender to him our hearty thanks for reproducing to our familiar knowledge his father, who has till now been to us of a younger generation little more than an honored and revered "nominis umbra," we are hardly less grateful for the equally intimate acquaintance he permits us, through these pages, to form with the heir of the paternal name, worth, learning, and reputation.

ART. VIII. — *The English Language in its Elements and Forms.* By W. C. FOWLER, late Professor of Rhetoric in Amherst College. New York: Harper and Brothers.

No subject offers more numerous difficulties to the teacher inclined to go beyond the mere letter of the text-books, and to ask the reasons of things, than that of English Grammar. Nor is there any subject in the curriculum of our lower schools which so generally awakens disgust on the part of the pupil. To the teacher, the multitude of books, the discrepancy in both principles and their applications, and, above all, the inadequacy of the system to meet the facts of the language, render it an unsatisfactory department. To the pupil, the long paradigms conveying no clear ideas, and the mass of exceptions overloading the rules, make the whole study tedious.

But why should this state of things exist? Why should it be at once so irksome and so unsatisfactory to study the principles of the language in which our thoughts find utterance every moment, and in which more living ideas are embodied than in any other tongue? Not for want of books, nor be-

cause these books are not well arranged; for their name is "legion," and it is not easy to see how the order or the plan of some of these could be improved. To us, this constant effort to bring forth a grammar is indicative of the essential errors of the whole system as at present treated. There is a half-perceived conviction that something is wrong, but it seems not to be understood where the defect lies. Hence, as medical men in obscure cases of disease continue to follow the same routine of doses, as the patient comes into the hands of one after the other, our grammarians make book after book on the same plan, and yet grammar is "nothing bettered." What is now wanted is, that some one with the close observation and clear analysis of which not a few medical men are capable, should take up the subject of English Grammar independently of the theories of others, and make a new generalization of the facts of the language. However useful it may be to the compiler of a book to consult five hundred authors on this subject, such a consultation can by no means take the place of a new and independent study of the language itself. Nor will a study of the parent languages from which ours is derived give us the necessary truth. Not a few errors have crept into our text-books from the attempt to make a grammar of our own from the principles of other languages.

In our estimation, the whole difficulty lies in the inadequacy of the system adopted. This is a shrivelled skeleton, held together by such contrivances as the anatomist uses, rather than by the natural ligaments which give grace and elasticity to the whole body. No amount of dressing can infuse life into it. Before English Grammar can take its place among the sciences, it must have a new growth from the germs that lie in the facts of the language, and it must be allowed to spring up unembarrassed by the forms which other languages may furnish. The rules which must govern its cultivation must be those which spring from its own modes of existence, in accordance with the essential principles of philology.

The condition of our language at the present time is not wholly unlike that of its Anglo-Saxon parent in the days of the Normans. If it is not now banished from polite society, it is still put to the torture in a vain attempt to make it fit the

Procrustean bed which grammarians have made for it. Close-knit and lithe, like the sons of the North, it is not long enough for the measure of the more loosely built, but more stately, language of sunny Italy. It has not the forms for the cases of nouns, nor those for comparison in many of the adjectives, nor for the modes or voices, nor personal endings for the verbs, which the Latin has. Yet it was formerly stretched to six case-forms, and has even now two voices and a mode that has no form, and personal endings which do not exist, that it may agree with the model derived from the Latin.

It is not difficult to see how this state of things originated. All the earlier writers on English Grammar were practically Latin grammarians, deeming that language the only one fit for educated men; and they naturally sought to bring the inferior English tongue to that type. But it is certainly time that our language should assume its majority, and be dealt with on its own terms. The true principle in respect to the case-forms has been admitted, at least, since the time of Murray; why should not the same principle be admitted in its application to all the grammatical modifications of words? The logical use is not deemed a sufficient reason for making a case without a word-form; why should the logical use be a reason for making a mode or voice without a corresponding word-form? There can be but one principle applicable to the grammatical modifications whether of the noun or the verb. Each case represents, not one relation, but a group of similar relations. Thus the nominative case represents all the naming relations, whether as subject, predicate, or independent; and the objective all the modifying relations, whether as the direct object, the indirect object, or otherwise. Why should not the same principle be admitted in respect to the remaining parts of speech? All nations recognize the distinction of the subjective and objective relations of the subject and the predicate. But while the Latin and Greek have word-forms to represent these relations, the English has a form only for the subjective, and it makes use of a grammatical equivalent to express the other. So, too, Latin and Greek verbs have forms to express the relations of the person and number of the subject, while some English verbs are wholly wanting in

these forms, and, with a single exception, all the others have a personal form only for the third person singular of the present and present perfect; and we have no form for number. Why, then, should our text-books be loaded with forms which represent nothing, while the only change is in the personal pronouns? Let the pupil learn to decline the pronouns according to person and number, and these with the tense-forms constitute nearly all that the language furnishes to be committed arbitrarily to memory.

Why should we not recognize in our language the fact that it has its own way of expressing the ideas common to all languages? The Greek has one method or contrivance for this, the Latin another, and the English another. In the Greek and Latin, we give specific designations only to actual word-forms. For the same reason, we should reject from our scientific statement of the peculiar forms of English grammar all compound phrases in which each of the words retains its own meaning. This rule would not apply to the tense-forms, since *have*, *had*, *will*, and *shall*, in this use, lay aside their ordinary meaning, and simply serve to distinguish time. Thus in the expression "I *have* gone," no idea of possession or ownership is suggested. Whatever might have been the force of *have* originally, it may safely be affirmed to have lost its primitive meaning in this use. So *to* with the infinitive has ceased to have its force as a preposition. In these instances the word used as the auxiliary has really become an element of a compound involving but one idea, and hence it is merely a contrivance to supply the place of specific forms. But in the compounds termed the passive and progressive voices, and the potential mode, each word retains its primitive meaning. "I am loved," affirms, first, the existence of the subject, and, as supplementary to this, a state or condition denoted by the participle. "I can go," affirms ability in respect to a particular action, for the good reason that the absolute sense of *can* is predicable only of the Almighty.

While we regret that Professor Fowler has adopted in general the same system as his predecessors, we are glad to find one improvement upon them. He has seen the impropriety of calling the participle in *ing* the *present* participle, nor has

he fallen into the equal error of calling it *imperfect*. The participles in fact have no reference to time, and both of them are alike *imperfect* in respect to the action. The participles denote states or conditions, and a condition necessarily implies continuance, therefore imperfection. Regarded in this light, the form in *ing* denotes a *subjective* state of progress or existence, and the other an *objective* state, or one simply of inaction. "He is running," affirms a condition without reference to time, having a *subjective* relation to *he*. "He is loved," affirms an *objective* condition of the subject, and represents it as at rest. That neither of the participles has reference to time will be evident if we analyze the relation of the ideas involved in their use. "He was running," certainly cannot affirm that he is *now* running. So "He is loved," if the participle is *perfect* either in respect to the time or the action involved, would mean that he is *not now* loved, though he was loved. While, then, we agree with Professor Fowler in rejecting the term "present," we would also reject the term "past." The participles are really definitive adjectives denoting the condition of a subject, except when they are used as verbal nouns. In this latter use they name an action as taking place, while the infinitive names it without reference to its performance. Or, in other words, we may say that the infinitive names it in the abstract, and the participle in the concrete.

The subject of connectives is a much more important one than it seems to be considered by most writers. We are glad to see that Professor Fowler has treated it at length. He has marked the different uses of the conjunction considered logically. Still there seems to be a want of clearness in the arrangement. Most writers are inclined to rank the preposition with the conjunction as a connective, while another important class of connectives is hardly treated as belonging to the same division of words. The class to which we refer consists of the relative pronouns and the adverbs derived from the same roots, as *when*, *where*, *then*, and their compounds. Of these the primary use is always connective, and not pronominal or adverbial, as they are usually considered. The relative connects a secondary proposition as a modifier of a preceding idea, and

represents the name of that idea in this proposition. The adverbs derived from the same roots are often equivalent to the oblique case of the relative.

The first class of connectives which we would make, then, we would call *relative connectives*, and their office is to connect a modifying proposition with a preceding word, and *pronominally* to represent that word in the modifying proposition. Of the words ranked as conjunctions, we shall readily find two classes having distinct offices. It was from not marking this division, that Gould Brown and others fell into the error of stating that "conjunctions connect verbs of the same mode and tense, and nouns and pronouns of the same case." As in many other false statements, there is some truth in this. One class of conjunctions, as *and*, *but*, and *or*, do connect verbs of the same mode and tense, and nouns and pronouns of the same case. The primary idea in the use of these words is that of addition, and this may be, as in algebra, either by the *plus* or the *minus* sign. We term this class of conjunctions *co-ordinate connectives*, a name already familiar to teachers. We would say, then, that the office of a co-ordinate conjunction is to unite two words, or two modifying phrases, two propositions, or two sentences in the same construction.

In respect to the remainder of the conjunctions, Brown's rule is incorrect. *If*, *though*, *unless*, *except*, and the like, never connect words, and the propositions which they connect are never in the same construction, or, as the grammars say, in the same mode. In the sentence, "He will go if he can," the second proposition, *he can*, expresses the condition upon which the first becomes a fact; or, to use the language of the grammarians, from which we dissent, an indicative mode is connected with a subjunctive. The idea involved in the use of *if* is not that of addition or joining, but the dependence of the connected proposition upon the former. These words are thus distinct in their office from those previously considered, and have been properly termed *subordinate connectives*. It will be seen that they are closely allied to prepositions, and in fact differ from these only in showing the relation of two *affirmations*, instead of the relation of two *ideas*. In reference to the language, the former show the relation of *propositions*, and the latter that of *words*.

In his study of particular words we are sorry that Professor Fowler has almost ignored what we consider the most difficult word, perhaps, in the language. We refer to *as*. We are told, in all grammars, that it is sometimes a relative, sometimes an adverb, and oftener a conjunction. Yet any one who attempts a critical analysis of its uses will find that they are not all included in this enumeration.

In this connection we may refer to what are termed "corresponding conjunctions." That these may exist in other languages we do not doubt. Thus, *et—et*, in Latin. But in English we have no corresponding word-form or construction. The logical idea is the same in all languages. The object is to emphasize the fact that both the things named are in the same construction. Thus, "*et terris et alto*,"—"both by land and sea." In this case the idea is the same in the two languages, but the grammatical contrivances for expressing it are very different. In the Latin, *et*, having no other use than as a connective, serves to double the connecting link. In English, the word *both*, which never has a connective signification, stands as the representative of the two things to which attention is directed. Whatever, therefore, may be the propriety of calling *et—et* and *aut—aut* corresponding conjunctions, the application of the term to the English mode of expressing the same idea is adapted only to mislead the pupil, by implying a use of *both* which does not exist.

Another important point on which we feel inclined to differ from most writers on this subject, is in respect to the government of modifying words. The terms *government* and *agreement* are words of doubtful value in English grammar, in which word-relations are few, and do not mark the relation of the ideas which the words primarily denote. In the classical languages a different state of things exists, and in those agreement and government are important elements of grammar.

We divide verbs into *transitive* and *intransitive*, the former requiring a direct object, upon which the action terminates, to complete the idea they express. The result of this division, as affecting syntax, is found in the universal rule of grammarians, that "transitive verbs govern the objective case," while

all other modifying nouns are the objects of prepositions, or governed without a governing word. We may in this see one of the evils that have resulted from the introduction of the *almost* foreign element of *government* into our grammar. While the modifying noun is really never governed by anything, — for it takes no change of form as the Latin nouns did, — the whole aim of the student has been to determine what never existed, overlooking entirely the only thing he should have sought for. We have all parsed words after this fashion a thousand times: — “A noun in the objective case governed by the verb, — transitive verbs govern the objective case”; or, “governed by the preposition, — prepositions govern the objective case.” Did these words ever give us the faintest *idea* of the use of the word, or its office as a vehicle of thought? The fact is, that, in English, nouns stand in various modifying relations to other words, and that we class these together as *objective* relations; and what we should do is to point out the relation which the word holds to the word it modifies. Yet this has never, so far as we know, been presented as the object of the study of grammar, unless in some very recent works. For an instance of the clear ideas the pupil could gain from the books, take Smith’s mode of disposing of *hour*, in the sentence, “He walked an *hour*.” “Hour is a common noun, third person, neuter gender, and objective case,” — neither of which terms really applies to *hour*, — “*without a governing word*.” Wells says of *hour*, in this connection, that it is “independent by ellipsis,” and Barrett, “it is an adverb.” Neither gives any idea of its use as a logical modifier of the verb. It would be vastly more to the purpose if we should simply say that “it is a noun used as a modifier of the verb *walked*, to denote duration.” If it is a *modifier*, unless it is in the *possessive* case or in *apposition*, it is of necessity in the objective case.

But we have more to say on the classification of verbs in respect to their governing power. The *transitive* verbs require the direct object to complete their meaning; but is it by any means complete with this? Take the verb *give*. The direct object is no more necessary than the indirect. Say to a man, “I gave,” and he will ask, “What?” Say, “A book,” and he

still asks, "To whom?" The meaning of "give" is as incomplete without the latter as without the former.

Transitive verbs are but one class among several into which all verbs should be divided, on the same principle. Some take the direct object without the indirect; some require the indirect object without the direct; some require both objects, and some neither. Our division into transitive and intransitive is therefore imperfect. Nor is it well founded. There is nothing *in kind*, in the nature of the relation existing between the verb and the direct object, in any respect different from that existing between the verb and the indirect object, or any of the other modifiers. The relations are simply distinct from each other. The verb *write* is not complete as the representative of an action, till it is modified by the *direct* object, the instrument, and the *indirect* object, the material on which, the reason, the time, and the manner. It is true, we do not always express all or either of these. Though clearly transitive, it depends altogether on the kind of writing in which we are engaged whether we add the direct object, or the indirect object, or both. If we speak of literary composition, we commonly add the direct object; if of correspondence, the indirect. Custom makes the *pen* the common instrument, and paper the common material, and we specify neither of these, because we take it for granted that these were used. But if there is anything peculiar in the instrument or in the material, we as uniformly specify it as we do either of the other objects.

We are now prepared to affirm that the rules given for modifying words are incorrect. We have all given the rule that "Transitive verbs govern the objective case." How many of us have ever asked, *why* or *how*? We do not now inquire as to the *form* which the direct object is required to take. This in Greek and Latin is the accusative, and in the English pronoun, the objective, in the English noun, the same form as the subject. All this we know very well. But what is the ground of this right to govern? If the accusative is the direct slave of the transitive verb, how comes it that twenty-six prepositions may, upon occasion, come in between the lord and the slave? If the noun is the direct object, it is all very well. But if the noun is in the accusative, denoting the time or space

in which the affirmation is completed, then is it simply "*put* into the accusative." If the pupil studies his lesson an *hour*, he finds that *lesson* is in the objective case, and is governed by *studies*; but *hour* is either *not governed*, "or would be if there was anything to govern it," or is "an adverb," — and all this without a reason. Now the Latin grammar had a better philosophy, we think, than this, and we are certain that the English has. The Latin accusative represented one class of modifying words, namely, those that serve to complete the affirmation in any respect. There is no difference, therefore, between "*ire Romam*," and "*ire ad amnem*." In either case, the accusative marks the place where motion ends, and completes the affirmation in that respect. All our twenty-six prepositions will be found to mark the same class of relations. The Latin *ablative*, on the other hand, marks the relation *in which*, not *at which*; and all the prepositions used with it indicate this class of relations. We may call those of the accusative the *completing* relations, and those of the ablative the *non-completing* relations. The government of the word, or the case-form which it takes, depends on the class of relations in which it stands, and has nothing to do with the preposition which stands before it. As there is but one *direct object* possible, no preposition can ever be necessary to mark it. But as the affirmation may be completed in many other ways, and as the form of the word would not distinguish these from the direct object, or from one another, prepositions become necessary as *signs* of the completing office each word serves. The prepositions answer the same purpose with the ablative case.

Similar principles as to the relations between the modifying words and those modified, exist in all languages. In the English, however, as we have but one *form*, instead of three, to mark modifying relations, we cannot so readily class them as in Latin. The transitive verb affirms an action which is completed on the direct object. This requires no sign to mark its relation, for the same reason for which the Latin direct object requires none. Every affirmation has respect to time; hence, in Latin, a word denoting *time*, placed in the accusative after a verb, is at once regarded as denoting the *continuance* of the affirmation. If the noun was used to denote

the time *in which*, it took in Latin the ablative form, and in English it takes a prefixed *preposition*. Some verbs, again, have respect to *space*, and a noun denoting *direction* or *distance*, after such verbs, is at once understood to complete the action in that respect. *Home* follows the principle of the Latin *domum*, and completes a man's journey. If his motion has any other relation to *home* than this, we insert a preposition, just as the Latins did. These *completing* words thus take no preposition, for the nature of the relation in which they stand is such that no sign is needed.

Another class comprises the *dative* or indirect relations. These in Latin took the dative case. We have seen that to some words this relation is no less essential than that of the direct object to the transitive verb. Such words, both verbs and adjectives, for the most part, take the modifying word without the sign *to*, as "give me," — *mihi*, — "like me," "resemble me." With other words *to* is always used; but it is necessary to mark the difference between *to* as expressing this relation, and *to* as the translation of *ad*, denoting the place where motion ends. *Similar* requires *to*; *go* also requires *to*; but for different reasons.

We are now prepared to state what we conceive to be the true doctrine in respect to this matter; namely, that the modifying word is governed by virtue of the modifying relation in which it stands to the word it modifies; and, secondly, that the preposition has no governing power, but serves to show which of the several relations included under either class is intended to be expressed, or, in particular instances, to distinguish the indirect from the direct object.

There are several other topics upon which we had proposed to speak, but we will confine ourselves to one more under this head of government. This is the use of the infinitive as a modifier of other words. The infinitive is properly a noun. As such it may stand in the same relations as other nouns, except in the possessive. It may stand as the subject, as the direct object, or as a modifier. But in nearly or quite all of the grammars hitherto in use, no notice has been taken of this fact. Fowler, indeed, calls it a noun, but does not explain its use. The common rule, that "the infinitive may depend on

a noun, participle, adjective, or verb," gives us no possible idea of its use. To call a cart a thing drawn by horses, oxen, or donkeys, would be but a poor definition of a cart, or of its uses. Yet it gives just as much information respecting the cart, as the rule cited from the grammars gives respecting the infinitive. Each defines the *position* of the object in respect to certain things with which it is commonly used ; and this is all. What then is the use of the infinitive ? It is used to modify nouns, adjectives, and verbs, in one of two relations, either as denoting *the purpose*, or as denoting that *in respect to which* the meaning of the word is taken. The former use was in the earlier habit of the language marked by *for* ; but the *for* is now omitted.

The etymological forms and syntax of Professor Fowler's work are its least important part. It has too often been the case that pupils are thoroughly drilled in the derivation and history of the classical languages, while they are totally ignorant of the derivation of their own. This has been in part owing to the difficulty of acquiring knowledge upon this subject. But that difficulty is now obviated. Professor Fowler has brought the whole subject of the derivation of the words and the grammatical forms of our language so compactly together, that the educated man, and even the ordinary English scholar, is hardly excusable for not acquiring a knowledge of this part of the grammar of our language ; and a more important service could not be performed by aught bearing the name or form of a grammatical treatise.